



St Christophers Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131564
Inspection date	14 July 2005
Inspector	Alison Large
Setting Address	St Christophers Church Centre, Pepys Avenue, Thornhill, Southampton, Hampshire, SO19 6PJ
Telephone number	07748 226933
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Registered person	St Christophers Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Christopher's Pre-school is a committee run group and opened in 1970. It operates from a hall in St Christopher's Church, in the Thornhill area of Southampton. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays Thursdays and Friday from 09:30 to 12:00 and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 12:30 to 15:00 term time only. All children have

access to a secure enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 45 children from 2 years 9 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these 38 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also support a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

Three staff work with the children. One staff member holds an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health within the setting is supported appropriately, staff ensure tables, kitchen and toilets are kept clean and wear gloves when dealing with bodily fluids. Children begin to learn the importance of good personal hygiene, they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack. However on some occasions hands are washed in a bowl of shared water which could cause infections to spread. Most documentation is in place although accident recording is not always acknowledged by the parent and not kept confidential to individual parents. All staff hold first aid certificates which are kept updated.

Children benefit from regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors. Children are able to run around and get fresh air in most weathers. Children are provided with a good range of equipment which enables them to practice moving their bodies and develop their muscles.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They have a snack which includes fruit on a regular basis, although little choice is offered, and a drink, but are unable to develop their independence by pouring their own drinks or helping prepare their snack. Children are unable to access drinks independently throughout the session which means during hot weather children's good health is not fully promoted.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment. Children are kept safe indoors and outdoors, the garden gate is kept locked and an alarm is fitted to the main door to ensure staff are aware of visitors to the group. Children develop an understanding of safety through reminders, such as a request to pick up toys from the floor to prevent someone tripping over. The group practice emergency evacuations every term, which increase children's awareness of everyday safety in the setting.

The organisation of the toys and equipment enables children to move around freely and independently to access the available resources staff have set out for them.

The staff have an understanding of child protection issues and have some knowledge of the signs which may indicate a child is being abused, they have the relevant procedures to follow for making a referral which means children's welfare is protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children arrive happily and are eager to participate. Children take part in a variety of activities throughout the session. They are confident in the setting and in their relationships with the staff and each other. Children enjoy their time in the pre-school, staff know the children and their family backgrounds well. When children arrive at the group upset, staff show sensitivity and give them attention until they are settled in an activity that interests them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. There is little challenge for children and chances for further development, so not all children's educational needs are met. Incidental learning is happening but staff fail to support and become involved in activities. Staff have a limited understanding of the Foundation stage and assessment is inadequate.

Children make friends, seek out others to share experiences, for example in group games and role play. Children relate well to staff and each other, and learn to take turns. Children are not given many opportunities to develop their independence for example at snack time or freely selecting equipment.

Many children are confident speakers and listeners and engage in conversations with other children and staff. Opportunities to write are available throughout the session, although there are no occasions for children to link letters and sounds or to name letters of the alphabet.

Children count confidently to 10, and some are able to extend the counting, staff fail to extend children's understanding of numbers through practical activities for example by encouraging the children to solve practical problems using simple addition and subtraction. Some children recognise shapes, colours and numbers, but insufficient planning means they are not included in practical activities.

Children have an understanding of caring for living things such as participating in growing activities and a visit to the farm. Children are able to learn about the wider world through outings and visitors to the group.

Children's physical skills develop through a variety of experiences including outdoor play.

Children use their imagination in their play, they enjoy role play. Children are beginning to differentiate colours and at the painting easel can choose their own colours from the selection available. However there was little staff interaction to support this and to discuss colours with the children in everyday activities. Children make some progress towards the early learning goals, however staff do not ensure planning is evaluated to highlight the next steps in children's learning and where children can be challenged further.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The individual needs of all children who attend are met. Children benefit from the staffs good relationship with parents which contributes to the children's well being. Information is shared through regular newsletters and daily chats, however limited information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and lack of detail in children's assessment records means staff and parents are not always working together to help children make progress.

Children with special needs or who speak English as an additional language are welcomed and staff ensure all children are able to participate fully. Children generally behave well. They begin to understand right and wrong through staff's use of praise and explanation, and staff support the children in sharing and turn taking.

The children have opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, displays and outings to places of interest. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are able to move around freely and feel at ease in the organised environment. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to contribute to children's play opportunities. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Not all relevant records are maintained as required particularly regarding consent to seek emergency medical advice and treatment for each child which means children's health and safety is not always ensured.

Staff training is limited and is not linked to appraisals and professional development to meet identified needs to support the provision in improving.

Staff have a limited awareness of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development. Children make some progress towards the early learning goals, however staff do not ensure planning is evaluated to highlight the next steps in children's learning and where children can be challenged further. Staff have not successfully addressed areas to improve the setting made at the last inspections and have not drawn up clear plans

to improve their aim. This affects their ability to monitor the provision, prioritise aims and address issues independently. This impacts on the children's development over time. Leadership and management are inadequate.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group were asked to update policies and procedures, improve documentation including register and accident book and obtain consent to seek emergency medical advice and treatment. The policies have been reviewed by the committee but all other recommendations had not been put in place when inspected. For nursery education they were asked to provide opportunities to develop independence and make choices, plan activities to extend children's learning making use of individual assessments and linked to Early Learning Goals and to provide practical activities which enable children to make progress in mathematical development and communication language and literacy. At the inspection it was found that little progress had been made in all these areas, which impacts on the children's overall development.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- obtain consent from parents to seek emergency medical advice and treatment
- ensure documentation is kept up to date as required, with particular regard to the register and accident book
- encourage children in their independence, accessing equipment and making choices

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- increase staffs knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals to improve the quality of teaching and children's learning.
- develop the systems for planning and assessing the educational provision, making use of individual assessments linking them to the Early Learning Goals
- provide opportunities to enable children to develop skills and make progress in communication language and literacy and mathematical development

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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